



September 23, 2005

Docket Clerk
Marketing Order Administration Branch
Fruit and Vegetable Programs
AMS, USDA
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STOP 0237
Washington, DC 20250-0237

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RE: Docket No. FV03-925-1PR
Federal Register Vol.70, No. 100, Page 30001
Grapes Grown in a Designated Area of Southeastern California and Imported
Table Grapes; Proposed Change in Regulatory Period
COMMENTS IN OPPOSITION TO PROPOSED CHANGE

Dear Docket Clerk:

The Diamond State Port Corporation (DSPC), a state entity that owns and manages the Port of Wilmington, Delaware, opposes the above referenced change in the dates that Table Grape Marketing Order 925 restrictions will place on table grapes supplied from Chile. The Port of Wilmington, Delaware is one of the United States' major ports of entry for Chilean grape imports.

Wilmington is the preferred port-of-call for many of Chile's largest fruit exporters and shipping groups, including Pacific Seaways, and Dole Fresh Fruit Company. Annually, we handle about 200,000 tons of Chilean fruit imports, primarily grapes. In April alone, 25,000 tons of fruit are discharged, stored and distributed through our Port.

In order to support Pacific Seaway's and Dole Deciduous' Chilean cargo growth and sustain its economic impact, the DSPC invested more than \$40 million in developing its on-dock cold storage facility and in acquiring cargo handling equipment. Today, the Port's refrigerated warehouse complex encompasses 700,000 sf. - the nation's largest! Furthermore, the Port is constructing a new 80,000 sf. cold storage warehouse exclusively for Dole's cargo growth to be completed and used as early as the 2006 Chilean fruit season.

DIAMOND STATE PORT CORPORATION

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PORT OF PERSONAL SERVICE

April's tonnage has a great financial impact on Port revenue and is a substantial economic catalyst in our region. Chilean grape imports are responsible for 33% of the Diamond State Port Corporation's April revenues; therefore, restricting this cargo will have serious consequences on our Port finances. For the region, these imports create 41 direct jobs, as well as 52 induced and indirect full time jobs, contribute \$2.3 million in revenue to our region, and result in \$2.6 million of tax revenue for tri-state governments.

DSPC concurs with the detailed comments and supporting data submitted by ASOEX, the Chilean Exporters Association. Specifically, DSPC urges the agency to reject the proposed change in the regulatory period. The change of effective date of the marketing order from April 20 to April 1 will have a direct negative effect on our business revenue, precipitate a loss of jobs, unnecessarily restrict the customers ability to purchase table grapes with few alternative fruit offerings available, and have an overall deleterious impact on our regional economy.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Gene Bailey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Gene" and last name "Bailey" clearly distinguishable.

Eugene R. Bailey,
Executive Director
Diamond State Port Corporation